

Demonstration and Protest Activity Update November 2005

INFORMATION ON VIOLENT RIOTS IN PARIS SUBURBS

For over a week, violent riots have been on-going in various Paris suburbs. It is best to steer clear of any of these communities and to keep alert to any changes in the situation by watching the news, contacting the Embassy or your Security Officer. At this time, there has been no targeting of tourists or incidents in the city of Paris itself. These riots are located in the suburbs of Paris. Enclosed in this update is the US Embassy Paris public announcement on this issue, a quick synopsis of the issue and a map of the affected areas.

REMEMBER TO USE YOUR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE MEASURES. BE SAFE. STAY AWAY FROM ANY INCIDENT OR CROWD OF YOUTHS THAT MAY TURN VIOLENT. BE ALERT TO YOUR SURROUNDINGS.

Public Announcement - France - Rioting in City Suburbs - Nov. 4, 2005

Significant rioting that began in the northern suburbs of Paris Oct. 27 has become extremely violent, as angry protesters set fire to several buildings and hundreds of vehicles. Although the riots have occurred in areas not normally frequented by U.S. tourists, travelers should be aware that train travel from the Charles de Gaulle Airport to the city center may be disrupted at times, as it passes near the affected area. Travelers could rely instead on airport buses or taxis to downtown Paris. Americans should avoid the affected areas that include the northern suburbs of Seine-Saint-Denis, (Clichy-sous-Bois, Aulnay-sous-Bois and Le Blanc-Mesnil) and also Trappes in the southwest of Paris), and should move quickly away from any demonstrations that they may encounter.

According to news reports, on November 3 the riots moved beyond Paris for the first time with reports of disorder in Dijon in eastern France, Marseilles in the south, and Normandy in the northwest. Travelers should be alert to news media reports for the most up-to-date information.

For the latest security information, Americans living and traveling abroad should regularly monitor the Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs Internet web site at <http://travel.state.gov>, where the current Worldwide Caution, Public Announcements, and Travel Warnings can be found. Up-to-date information on security can also be obtained by calling 1-888-407-4747 toll free in the U.S., or, for callers outside the U.S. and Canada, a regular toll line at 1-317-472-2328. These numbers are available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).

Travelers in France who need assistance can contact the U.S. Embassy at 01-4312-2222, or by email at: citizeninfo@state.gov. The Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Paris is located at 2 Rue St. Florentin, 75001 Paris (Place de La Concorde, Metro Stop Concorde), tel.(in Europe) 00-33-1-43-12-22-22 or (in France) 01-43-12-22-22; fax 011-33-1-42-61-61-40. Further information can be obtained at the U.S. Embassy's web site at <http://france.usembassy.gov>.

Some Background information on the violence in Paris Suburbs: (information compiled from various news sources)

The first riots erupted after two boys, aged 15 and 19, one of Tunisian origin, the other from sub-Saharan Africa, were electrocuted on Oct. 27 by high-voltage equipment in an electricity substation, where they took refuge because they were being pursued by police, their families said. The police denied there was any pursuit. The public prosecutor's office said it has opened an investigation into the case. The violence, which started Oct. 27 and has continued every night since, has exposed the discontent simmering in France's poor suburbs. The Seine-Saint-Denis region where the troubles are centered is dominated by low-income housing projects that are home to many African Muslim immigrants and their children and marked by high unemployment and crime. Cars, buses and business located in these poor suburb communities have been the target of gangs of youths. Several businesses have been destroyed putting over 1000 people out of work. In total over 400 vehicles have been torched and destroyed to include vehicles in the cities of Dijon and Marseilles. Unfortunately, it appears that this same type of violence appears to be spreading to other major French cities which also have disaffected youths living in poor suburb communities similar to those on the outskirts of Paris. This string of violence has created a huge political debate among French politicians regarding the larger problem of integration of the predominantly North African Muslim population living in these affected suburbs throughout France.

Beginning just after World War II, France allowed in hundreds of thousands of manual laborers from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. They settled mostly in housing projects, which were specially constructed for them, outside Paris, Lyon, Marseille and other large cities. France's population of immigrants more than doubled from 1946 to 1999.

Joblessness for male youths 20-24 years old in these communities are between 37-39%, above the national average of approx 22% and way above 7.8% for men aged 25-49 years old.

This integration problem is one that will not go away anytime soon and will become a major issue in French politics for some time, especially with the election in 2007. Other incidents similar to the one that "sparked" this series of violence will unfortunately probably continue to occur, creating once again friction between police, politicians and members of these poor suburban housing projects throughout France.



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MAP OF AFFECTED PARIS SUBURBS

